

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 05836 01 OF 02 072028Z

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UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 5836

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: LE POINT ARTICLE ON FONMIN JOBERT

1. SUMMARY. GEORGES SUFFERT, DEPUTY EDITOR OF INFLUENTIAL FRENCH PRO-GOVERNMENT WEEKLY LE POINT, HAS PUBLISHED ARTICLE IN MARCH 4 EDITION OF LE POINT BASED ON EXTENSIVE INTERVIEW WITH FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER ENTITLED, "IS MICHEL JOBERT WRONG?" WE ARE TRANSMITTING INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF ENTIRE ARTICLE BECAUSE IT REVEALS HOW JOBERT WISHES PUBLIC (FRENCH AND FOREIGN) TO VIEW GOF POLICIES REGARDING EUROPE AND THE U.S. ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, JOBERT BELIEVES THREE FACTS DEMONSTRATE U.S. IS NO LONGER INTERESTED IN UNITED EUROPE AS PART OF USAEUROPEAN ALLIANCE: FIRST, 1973 US-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR SHOWED THAT SOVIET UNION HAS BECOME "PRIVILEGED INTERLOCUTOR"

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PAGE 02 PARIS 05836 01 OF 02 072028Z

OF THE U.S. SECOND, U.S. RESENTED EC-NINE RESOLUTION

OF NOVEMBER 6 ON MIDDLE EAST BECAUSE IT APPEARED TO BE AN EXPRESSION OF DEFIANCE TOWARD U.S. THIRD, WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE DEMONSTRATED THAT "EDIFICE ON WHICH (EC) CONSTRUCTION HAD BEGUN IN COPENHAGEN CRUMBLER." END SUMMARY

2. BEGIN TEXT. IS HE REALLY RECKLESS, THIS LITTLE FRENCHMAN WHO CLAIMS TO BE THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF HIS COUNTRY, WHO WITH HIS LITTLE UTTERANCES, UNTRANSLATABLE IRONIES AND COLD REFUSALS IS ABLE TO BLOCK ATLANTIC UNANIMITY? WHAT DOES HE WANT, THIS PERSONALITY WHO SMILINGLY CALLS HIS EUROPEAN ALLIES "TRAITORS" AND WHOM MR. RICHARD NIXON DESCRIBES AMIABLY AS A "PAROCHIAL POLITICIAN"? NOBODY KNOWS. BUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS OBSTINACY ARE NOW BECOMING APPARENT: FRANCE IS BEGINNING AGAIN TO BE DISLIKED ABROAD, AS IN THE HEYDAY OF GENERAL DE GAULLE. FURTHER, SUMS UP AN AMERICAN, THE GENERAL'S OUTBURSTS WERE MORE EXCUSABLE THAN THOSE OF MICHEL JOBERT: "ONE WAS BIG, THE OTHER IS SMALL. THAT'S THE WHOLE DIFFERENCE."

UNDER THE AVALANCHE OF REPROACH, MICHEL JOBERT REMAINS APPARENTLY INDIFFERENT. RARELY DOES A NOTE OF VEHEMENCE PIERCE THE OFF-HANDED, ENGAGING MANNER OF HIS SPEECH. METHODICAL, PRECISE SPEECH WHICH DESERVES TO BE STUDIED BEFORE BEING CONDEMNED.

FOR THE FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER, THE DANGER IS THAT NOTHING WILL BE UNDERSTOOD OF EVENTS IF THE STAKES AND THE PROCEDURE ARE FORGOTTEN.

FIRST, THE STAKES: THE CURRENT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES BEARS NEITHER ON ENERGY, NOR ON THE ALLIANCE, NOR EVEN ON DEFENSE. BUT QUITE SIMPLY ON THE NOTION OF PARTNERSHIP. NEITHER THE IDEA NOR THE WORD IS FRENCH. THEY WERE INVENTED IN THE U.S. BY PRESIDENT JOHN KENNEDY. AT THE TIME, NO AMBIGUITY ABOUT THE DEFINITION: AT THE END OF A PROCESS WHICH SHOULD BE AS RAPID AS POSSIBLE, THE ALLIANCE WOULD BECOME THE COMMON BUSINESS OF TWO PARTICIPANTS, AND TWO ONLY: THE UNITED STATES ON ONE HAND, UNITED EUROPE ON THE OTHER. ANY OTHER SYSTEM COULD IN FACT UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 PARIS 05836 01 OF 02 072028Z

ONLY LEAD TO FAILURE, SINCE THE U.S. IS A NATION AND EUROPE A CONGLOMERATE. THE U.S. SHOULD THUS HELP EUROPE TO UNITE WHATEVER THE LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF THIS CREATION OF A NEW BIG POWER ON THE WORLD MAP. YET MICHEL JOBERT FEELS THAT CURRENT U.S. POLICY NO LONGER IS IN CONFORMITY WITH THAT OBJECTIVE. THE FACTS, HE FEELS, CLEARLY SHOW THIS CHANGE OF COURSE OF AMERICAN POLICY.

WHAT FACTS? THERE ARE THREE:

-- THE FIRST (WHICH EVERYBODY TODAY SEEMS TO FORGET) OCCURRED JUNE 22, 1973 IN WASHINGTON. MSSRS NIXON AND BREZHNEV MET THAT DAY TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT WHICH PROFOUNDLY ALTERED THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE. AT THE TIME, MOREOVER, OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE COMMENT QUALIFIED THE NIXON-BREZHNEV PROTOCOL AS AN "HISTORIC EVENT." AND THIS WAS CORRECT: THE TWO COUNTRIES UNDERTOOK TO ENGAGE IN PERMANENT CONSULTATIONS, TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES IN BILATERAL CONVERSATIONS, TO SPEED UP THEIR EFFORTS TO LIMIT THE EXPENSE OF ARMS.

THIS SPECTACULAR AND REASSURING RAPPROACHEMENT OBVIOUSLY HAD CONSEQUENCES. THE SOVIET UNION BECAME A PRIVILEGED INTERLOCUTOR OF THE UNITED STATES. WHEN THERE IS INTERNATIONAL TENSION, IT IS WITH MOSCOW THAT WASHINGTON WILL TALK FIRST. SUBTLY, THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE BECAME SECONDARY. ITS MECHANISMS AND ITS SPIRIT WILL OPERATE ONLY IF COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE TWO BIG POWERS TURNS OUT TO BE IMPOSSIBLE. NO ONE AT THE TIME CLEARLY PERCEIVED THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE. BUT THE MIDDLE EAST WAS NOT LONG IN BRINGING INTO FULL LIGHT THIS ASPECT OF THE NIXON-BREZHNEV AGREEMENT.

-- WHEN THE MIDDLE EAST WAR BROKE OUT, MR. KISSINGER RESPONDED WITH THE GREATEST SPEED, AND NOBODY DREAMED OF REPROACHING HIM FOR IT. HE OPENED A DAILY AND DRAMATIC DIALOGUE WITH HIS SOVIET ADVERSARY-ALLY, HE WENT TO MOSCOW TO GET ASSURANCES OF ITS INTENTIONS, HE SUPPORTED ISRAEL AND SPEEDED HIS RAPPROACHEMENT WITH EGYPT. NO TIME TO INFORM GREAT BRITAIN, GERMANY AND FRANCE. THE RESULT WAS NOT LONG IN COMING: GERMANY AND BRITAIN PUBLICLY TOOK THEIR

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 PARIS 05836 01 OF 02 072028Z

DISTANCE TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. MR. KISSINGER EXHIBITED ASTONISHMENT.

HE WAS MORE ASTRONISHED STILL WHEN THE RESOLUTION OF THE NINE OF NOVEMBER 6 APPEARED. NOT THAT (HE WAS SHOCKED BY THE ESSENCE OF THE DECLARATION: HE WAS NOT UNAWARE OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE ENERGY PROBLEM FOR EUROPE. HE WAS NO MORE ASTONISHED BY THE LIGHTLY PRO-ARAB TONE OF THE DOCUMENT: HE HAD ALREADY HAD THE OCCASION TO TALK WITH THE BRITISH AND THE FRENCH ABOUT MIDDLE EAST PROBLEMS. THEN, THE VIEWS OF THE THREE COUNTRIES WERE NOT SO FAR APART.

WHAT SHOCKED HIM, IN REALITY, WAS QUITE SIMPLY THE EMERGENCE OF EUROPE. FOR THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT:

THIS TEXT WAS QUITE SIMPLY A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.
HENRY KISSINGER KNEW, INTELLECTUALLY, THAT THE PROBLEM
WOULD COME, SOONER OR LATER. BUT HE DID NOT FORESEE IT
HAPPENING IN THE MIDDLE OF A FULLBLOWN INTERNATIONAL
CRISIS. AND HE RESENTED IT AS AN OFFENSE IN HIS REGARD
AND THE EXPRESSION OF DEFIANCE TOWARDS HIS COUNTRY.....
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PAGE 01 PARIS 05836 02 OF 02 072039Z

67

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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 PARIS 5836

KISSINGER IS A DIPLOMAT WHOSE METHODS ARE MODERN BUT
WHOSE THOUGHT IS CLASSIC. AT BOTTOM, HE IS FAITHFUL TO
THE OLD LAW OF "DIVIDE TO RULE." BETTER A EUROPE IN
PIECES -- AND THUS NECESSARILY SUBORDINATE TO THE U.S. --
THAN A UNIFIED CONTINENT, WHICH INEVITABLY WOULD HAVE ITS OWN
DYNANISM.

-- THE THIRD ACT TOOK PLACE IN WASHINGTON . . .

KISSINGER INVITED EACH OF HIS COLLEAGUES, ONE AFTER

THE OTHER, TO TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT. EITHER ASSEMBLE AROUND AMERICAN POSITIONS, OR PUT INTO QUESTION THE DEFENSE AGREEMENTS BETWEEN AMERICA AND EUROPE. MICHEL JOBERT STOOD UP TO THIS IN VAIN. THE COUNTRY HE REPRESENTS LACKS THE NECESSARY POWER TO COUNTER THE UNITED STATES, THE OTHER EUROPEAN NATIONS, WHOM FRENCH MANNERS IRRITATE ALMOST AS MUCH AS AMERICAN METHODS, UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 PARIS 05836 02 OF 02 072039Z

PREFERRED TO RALLY TO THE POWERFUL FRIEND. IN WASHINGTON, KISSINGER GAVE THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE IS DEFINITELY THE BOSS. THE EDIFICE ON WHICH CONSTRUCTION HAD BEGUN IN COPENHAGEN CRUMBLED. MICHEL JOBERT SEEMED TO BE WALKING AMONG THE RUINS.

DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN AMERICAN AND FRENCH SPECIALISTS IS NOT SO GREAT CONCERNING THIS ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIVES SOUGHT, AND OF FACTS.

CERTAINLY MR KISSINGER DOES NOT WANT TO IMPOSE ALL HIS VIEWS ON EUROPE. HE SIMPLY WANTS THE U.S., GERMANY, GREAT BRITAIN AND FRANCE TO ACT IN CONCERT REGULARLY IN ORDER TO DIVIDE UP THE TASKS. HE HAS SAID SO MANY TIMES TO MR JOBERT: "LET'S MAKE AN AGREEMENT AMONG FOUR. WHAT GREAT POLICIES WE COULD FORMULATE THEN" EACH TIME MR JOBERT HAS REPLIED: NOT AMONG FOUR. AMONG TWO. THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE." "THAT'S RIGHT," REPLIES MR KISSINGER, "I KEEP FORGETTING . . ." "HE ALWAYS FORGETS BECAUSE HE DOESN'T WANT A UNITED EUROPE. "AT BOTTOM, MR JOBERT IS RIGHT," DECLARES A BRITISH DIPLOMAT. "BUT THE METHOD HE USES IS BAD."

AN OPINION SHARED BY MOST SERIOUS POLITICAL MEN IN EUROPE. FOR NEITHER IN LONDON NOR IN BONN DO PEOPLE FEEL QUITE ASSURED. THE SPEEDED-UP GATHERING IN WASHINGTON OF THE MIRACLE-COMMITTEE SOUGHT BY MR KISSINGER (AND REJECTED BY FRANCE) IRRITATES GERMANS AND BRITONS. WHY PUSH SO HARD? WHY MEET AGAIN IN THE U.S. AND NOT IN EUROPE? WHAT CAN MR KISSINGER OFFER? THREE TIMES HE HAS HINTED THAT THE EMBARGO WOULD BE LIFTED. IT WASN'T. HE ANNOUNCED THAT THE OIL PRODUCERS WOULD LOWER THEIR PRICES. THE DECREASE DID NOT OCCUR. AND IF MR KISSINGER SIMPLY WANTED TO DEMONSTRATE HIS POWER? INEVITABLY, IN LONDON AND BONN, WITHOUT SAYING IT TOO MUCH, PEOPLE ARE BEGINNING TO ASK THEMSELVES THE SAME QUESTIONS MR JOBERT ASKED HIMSELF WHEN, LAST SUMMERS, HE TALKED ONE-TO-ONE WITH MR KISSINGER FOR HOURS.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 PARIS 05836 02 OF 02 072039Z

WHERE, THEN, LIES MR JOBERT'S FAULT? PERHAPS IT CAN BE EXPRESSED IN ONE SENTENCE. HE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE HIS POSITION CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY HIS EUROPEAN PARTNERS. TO ALL OF THEM, MICHEL JOBERT IS DEFENDING THE ARGUMENTS OF GENERAL DE GAULLE. YET IN A WAY IT IS IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. THE GENERAL BARELY BELIEVED IN EUROPE. WHILE MICHEL JOBERT IS A EUROPEAN. THE PROOF? HE DID NOT ASK THAT ALL OF THE NINE GO TO WASHINGTON. BUT SIMPLY THAT EUROPE BE REPRESENTED BY WALTER SCHEEL, GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF THE NINE. THAT IS NOT EXACTLY A GAULLIST POSITION.

WHEN THE WHISKS THROUGH THE ARAB CAPITALS, IT IS NOT ONLY FRANCE THAT (JOBERT) WANTS TO INVOLVE IN THIS REGION, BUT ALL OF EUROPE. BESIDES, WHY SHOULD HE (ALONE) BE CRITICIZED FOR THIS, SINCE HE MEETS GERMANS AND BRITISH THERE?

WHAT DID HE PROPOSE LAST FRIDAY IN BONN, IF NOT THE ELEMENTS OF A COMMON ENERGY POLICY BETWEEN FRANCE AND GERMANY, IN PUREST MONNET-ERA STYLE?

WHY DOES HE PRESS SO FOR HIS CONFERENCE BETWEEN EUROPEANS, PRODUCER STATES AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES? BECAUSE HE IS CONVINCED THAT EUROPE--NOT FRANCE ALONE -- HAS A CHANCE TO COME INTO BEING IF IT DECIDES TO ASSUME ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, COORDINATE ITS ACTIONS, IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND IN AFRICA.

FOR THE MOMENT, THE EIGHT REGARD HIM WITH SUSPICION. THEY UNDERSTAND HIM BADLY. HIS COLDNESS, HIS IRONY PUT THEM OFF. "I'LL TELL YOU," SAYS A GERMAN. "CHIRAC, WE UNDERSTAND. HE SAYS WHAT HE WANTS, HE GETS ANGRY, HE SLAMS THE DOOR. WITH HIM, THEINGS ARE CLEAR, COMPROMISES POSSIBLE. WITH JOBERT, WE SENSE A HELD-IN POWER, A VEILED PASSION. AND WE DON'T UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT HE WANTS TO DO."

"THEY'LL END UP UNDERSTANDING, "MICHEL JOBERT DECLARES SMILING. BECAUSE THEY CAN DO NOTHING WITHOUT US."

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 PARIS 05836 02 OF 02 072039Z

AND IT IS TRUE THAT THE U.S. IS SEEKING A WAY TO BRING THE
FRENCH AND BRITISH INTO THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS.
TO GUARANTEE, ALONE, THE AGREEMENT THAT MAY BE SIGNED IN A FEW
WEEKS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB
COUNTRIES NOW SEEMS SOMEWHAT RISKY TO THE U.S.

AND IT IS TRUE THAT, IN BONN AS IN LONDON, THEY
WANT TO RE-OPEN THE LINES WITH PARIS. SUDDENLY, THE
TENDENCY IS TO DETENTE. PUBLIC OPINION DOES NOT KNOW
IT YET. BUT GOVERNMENTS HAVE FEW ILLUSIONS.

IN SUM, MICHEL JOBERT THINKS MR KISSINGER SIMPLY
GOT A BIT UPSET WHEN HE SAW APPEAR ACROSS THE ATLANTIC,
IN THE MISTS OF NOVEMBER, A SORT OF PHANTOM HE DIDN'T
BELIEVE: EUROPE. HE WHISTLED THEN, FOR THIS UNCERTAIN
SHAPE TO DISAPPEAR.

AND FOR A MOMENT EVERYBODY THOUGHT THERE WAS NOTHING
MORE TO IT. BUT IT ISN'T TRUE. WHEN ONE THINKS
EUROPE EXISTS, ONE IS WRONG, IT IS STILL ONLY A VAGUE
FORM. BUT WHEN ONE DECLARES THAT EUROPE IS DEAD, ONE
IS EQUALLY MISTAKEN. BECAUSE ALREADY, BY THE FORCE OF
CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS RISING AGAIN. END OF TEXT.

3. FRENCH TEXT OF ARTICLE POUCHED EUR/WE.STONE

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